

News Release



Controller of the State of California - Kathleen Connell

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTROLLER'S EDUCATION PLAN TEAMS COMMUNITY COLLEGES WITH HIGH-TECH PLAYERS

City College of San Francisco Selected for New Public-Private Partnership

SAN FRANCISCO, April 29 -- Uniting community colleges with major players in California's technology-based emerging industries is the goal of a new education program launched by State Controller Kathleen Connell today at City College of San Francisco - Evans Campus. The self-sustaining program will utilize existing resources by linking local high-tech companies with nearby community colleges in an effort to better train students and stimulate economic growth.

"Our community colleges are an untapped resource for training Californians to participate in the state's new high-tech-based economy," said Connell, California's Chief Financial Officer. "It is only natural to pair our 106 community colleges with private-sector 'mentors' -- utilizing the infrastructure already in place."

The pilot program calls for five community colleges to partner with companies in what Connell has termed "emerging industries" -- high-tech communications, computer-aided fashion design, new media, international trade and biosciences. Businesses named to the program's statewide advisory board will act as an industry bridge to the community colleges by bringing first-hand industry knowledge into classrooms; offering on-site internships for students *and* teachers; supplying support and technical expertise to develop targeted curricula and loaning state-of-the-art equipment to schools for training.

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Industry executives and government officials named to the program's statewide advisory board, and whose companies will work specifically with the fashion design and apparel industry component of school's award-winning *Garment 2000* program include: Brenda French, President of *French Rags*; John Powers, Regional Manager for *Gerber Garment Technology*; Katie Quan, District Manager for San Francisco's *Unite*; and San Francisco Supervisor Mabel Teng.

"I've met with CEOs from across the state. Their number one concern isn't taxes or even regulation -- it's the quality of the labor force," said Connell. "Many businesses are suffering because California's education system is failing to produce the high-tech workers they need. If we're unable to meet the challenge presented by knowledge-based industries, there is a risk that high-tech California companies may choose to invest their dollars out of state."

"It is a pleasure to participate in the public-private partnership that State Controller Connell has forged for California," said Powers. "The program will provide an excellent opportunity for people to enhance their professional skills and earning abilities while providing business with a well-trained labor force. This cooperation between the public and private sectors will help continue the growth in the California economy." Supervisor Teng added, "Garment 2000 is a true working partnership between government, education, business and labor. Their work to revitalize the Bay Area's garment industry by introducing new technology and teaching advanced manufacturing methods is critical. I am pleased that Connell selected Garment 2000 as a state-wide model program."

Connell's program will be supported by legislation she is proposing that is being carried by Assemblymember Ted Lempert (D-Palo Alto). The bill, AB 1149, will offer tax credits to companies that invest in California's colleges by donating the types of equipment used in the workplace, and by helping to fund campus facilities that mirror their own.

"The community colleges don't have the resources right now to purchase the equipment themselves," said Connell. "The passage of this bill will go a long way toward helping students compete, without spending general fund dollars."

City College of San Francisco is one of five schools named to the pilot program. Santa Monica College and Mission College in Santa Clara were announced earlier this month. Two additional colleges will be named throughout April, both focusing on a different emerging industry.